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Potato Inquiries.

The blight and rot have made the cultivation of potatoes a very uncertain business, and even where successful an expensive one. What to do about it is a question. The Rural New Yorker gives some information that will be interesting and perhaps valuable.

Do you know anything about the Eldorado potato, the potato that has created such a furore in Great Britain the past three years? Mr. Chas. Needham of Withersden, Lincolnshire, England, obtained from a one-half ounce potato of this variety 361 pounds in one year, largest hill weighing 14 1-2 pounds, largest potato weighing two pounds and 100 weighing 100 pounds (these were from the 361 pounds raised from this one-half ounce potato). The Eldorado was also sold in Fall of 1903 by Geo. Massey, 14 pounds for \$7,000, and in the Spring of 1904 Alfred Dunham paid \$250 for a five-ounce one, smaller ones selling in February of 1904 at the rate of \$1.250 per pound. Eldorado is claimed to be absolutely blight and disease proof; it is this, together with its wonderful vigor, and its enormous cropping qualities that caused such a sensation. We imported some last year direct from the originator at a cost of \$16 per pound. We cut two single eyes, planted with complete fertilizer, after sod at rate of two tons to acre, and got from one pound 148 pounds. They are of the most handsome appearance, nearly round, white russeted skin, eyes nearly level with skin, and, in fact, we grow some 30 different kinds for our seed trade, but we have no half so fine appearing potato. Potatoes on both sides of these (wet, heavy muck) rotted fully 30 per cent and not an Eldorado had a speck, and has not at this date. Although they were planted only single eyes, they seemed to stool out beneath the surface, and four and five stalks came up; you would think we had planted a good-sized potato there.

Beachville, Ont.

References were made in this department to the astonishing prices paid for Eldorado and other new seedling potatoes in England in issues of The R. N.-Y. for August 27, 1904, and January 14, 1905, and also to the probability that the hurried methods then in use to increase stocks of the most highly exploited varieties would tend to reduce their vitality and render them liable to the very diseases to which they were claimed to be resistant and even immune. Late correspondence emphatically confirms this view. Thousands of tons of the new stunners are said to be rotting in storage. The boom is dead, sales being almost at a standstill, though the highly praised new sorts are freely offered for seed purposes at prices running from two to 10 cents a pound. Eldorado comes out with about the best reputation of the lot, and is considered as well worth trial by all interested.

It is claimed by those in position to know to be really an extra fine cropper, of good quality and resistant to rot under any reasonable method of cultivation. We are glad to learn it has been grown on this side with good success.

Please tell us something further about this new Solanum Commersoni, violet potato. I have not noticed it being mentioned in The R. N. Y. or other farm papers.

Cuba, Mo.

Solanum Commersoni was referred to at some length in The R. N. Y., September 10, 1904, and on page 44 of the present volume. There is much confusion concerning the botany of the various wild potatoes or edible tuberous-rooted Solanums, but S. Commersoni, first discovered growing in the swamps of Uruguay, is regarded as a quite distinct species. The tubers in the wild type are bitter and unfit for human food, but are readily eaten by cattle. It has been most enthusiastically cultivated for several years by French experimenters, and under their treatment has been greatly modified, several promising varieties having been developed through varied culture, selection and hybridization with commercial potatoes. The new violet-colored variety raised by M. Labergerie, Verrieres, France, is regarded as most promising, and is being first disseminated this season. The tubers are large and the plant is claimed to be extraordinarily vigorous, and productive beyond any variety of ordinary potato. It grows in heavy and even swampy ground where other potatoes fail, is practically immune from disease, and resists frost to a remarkable degree. The flesh is greenish, but claimed to be of fine quality when cooked. It will interest readers to know that this promising novelty can be obtained in small quantities for trial, at a cost of about \$1.00 the pound. So far as we know it has not yet been tested in this country, having only been obtained by the originator in 1901. This Commersoni variety is said greatly to resemble an old disease-proof form of the common potato known as Blue Giant, but M. Labergerie says it is an absolutely distinct variety.

Market Gardening.

The Orlando Reporter prints an article which gives a good idea of what is being done in this state in the line of market gardening.

As an illustration of what determined men can accomplish in Florida soil if they go about it intelligently it would do many a pessimist good to look into the great cantaloupe enterprise of the Harrell and Company plantation at Anthony.

Here are men who will control 600 solid acres of Rocky Ford melons this season. They themselves planted 375 acres. The seed alone costing \$700. Fortunes have been made in this business by a number of growers in that section and about Ocala.

In other localities, such as Starke, Lawtey, Plant City and Lakeland, other fortunes are being made in the single industry of strawberry growing.

Elsewhere, as at Hastings, they have a great reputation as a potato growing section and a vast deal of money is annually poured into that and other places devoted to this crop.

Again, the lettuce and celery districts of Sanford, Ocala, Manatee and Tampa afford practical illustrations of the wealth there is in the soil and climate of Florida.

And so with the bean and tomato sections of the East Coast where men often make enough out of a single crop to retire and live on the proceeds for life.

These are not extremes or isolated cases. Time was when a great big interrogation mark could be planted with every seed in this state. Questions like these would arise: Will it come up? Will it fruit in time to catch the early Northern market? Can I get it to market if it should grow? Will I get anything for it if it reaches market? But that time is now past.

All these questions can be answered in the affirmative, yes. To be sure there may be conditions where for a single season, in one part of the state or another, a crop may not pan out as expected. A wet spell, a dry spell or a frost may get in their destructive work and there will be loss. But a loss of one crop in a single locality must not be permitted to blacken the eye of all the crops in the state. And of course freight rates sometimes eat up the entire shipment and there is a loss after the labor has been done, and yet that is not the rule for, after a section once grows a crop of any kind to such proportions that there is something more than a few scattering individual shipments, then the railroads make it a point to go to extra trouble to secure that crop at such rates that make it profitable to the grower.

Then, too, the time is not far off when this matter of arbitrary and oppressive railroad rates will surely be regulated. And the question of commission and market men is also being solved. There are many honest men in that business and the state is now over-run with buyers who purchase the crops on the ground, saving all risks on the part of the grower. These are all healthy and hopeful conditions, and any man who now desires to go into the market gardening business for profit has only to select his location and follow his neighbors; for what one man has done others can do.

Good Ideas.

"A man who reads and who knows how to do good work; who knows about city life and how to make money in the country."

Under this title the Southern Cultivator publishes a letter which contains several good ideas.

The book mentioned, "Ten Acres Enough," is an old one, having been published by the Orange Judd Co. about forty years ago. We do not know whether they offer it for sale now or not, but there are many good things in it. The following article shows the difficulty of getting work done, as you want it, unless you are your own foreman.

I have been wanting to write you ever since I finished reading "Ten Acres Enough," but as this is the busy season, I find it hard to do any writing other than the ordering of seeds, etc. Then, too, I am doing my own "overseeing" this year, and I find that what, with looking after the plows, getting corn and cotton land ready, looking after and doing a good deal of the work in the truck, and the getting of small fruits started, seeing that the dairy (about twelve milk cows), is looked after as it should be, and all the other details are attended to, gives me about all I can well attend to. But to go back to "Ten Acres Enough," I want to say that it is without exception one of the best things I have ever read, and I wish it could be placed in the hands of every young man clerking in the city stores. Could these fellows but know what it would mean to them in years to come, would they but cut loose from the life of slavery that they are now leading and get out into God's free air, and work in mother earth, as some of us have learned rather late in life, not only would the labor question of the South be solved, but the coming generation would be made up of better and stronger men and women than that which we, the early middle-life people of today, represent. Having been through every stage of store life, from errand boy at \$1.00 per week, to manager, at from \$3,500 to \$4,000 per year, I know whereof I speak.

But enough of this; I want to know what you in confidence think of the cotton-chopping machines as we have them on the market today? Will they do good work if the cotton has been planted with a Caldwell dropper, or are they only intended for use where the old style planter has been used? Being a Northern man I naturally look for all the improved machinery I can find let me say a word right here as to the ordinary Southern overseer: Three years ago I bought a Planet Jr. Cultivator; this was when I first came down here. I have had three overseers, and not one of them could I get to use the machine. Being my own overseer this year, I tell you right now that the tool will be used the coming summer, and two Georgia made ones as well. It seems to me that tools such as Hydes cultivators should save a lot of work in cotton and corn. Am I right? I am very anxious to meet you personally for